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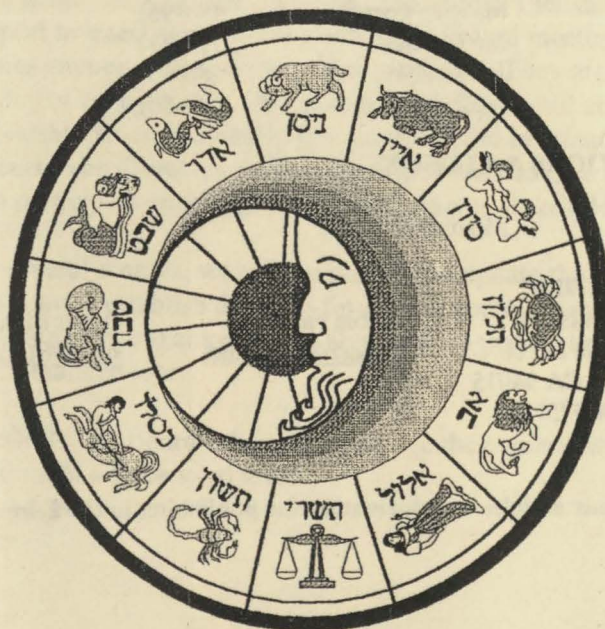
Bulletin

September 2003, 5764

KJA

1575 Annie Street
Daly City, Ca 94015

C'Shanah Tovah



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NOTE:

Please address your articles or information for publishing to the Editors

President's Message

Dear Members:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year.

This is the second issue of the Bulletin in the year 2003. In my previous message, I informed you that the Board would be meeting to review and establish new goals and objectives for the coming year. The goals and accomplishments are summarized in a separate section of this bulletin. The top areas of focus are: education and communication. The Board has established committees and is focused on completing some important projects and on achieving broad goals for the greater good of our community. The Board would like to give each of you the opportunity to help contribute to these goals. Please contact the committee chairs identified in the subsequent articles, or any Board Member to offer your input and assistance.

The Board had elections of its officers in July and voted for a change to the By-laws for the term of the officers. The new term for the officers (President and Vice President) is decreased from four years to two years, with a maximum of three consecutive terms. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms for the Secretary and the Treasurer. The elected officers are the same for the next two-year term.

I would like to thank Joe Abel, David Khedr, and Shawn Lichaa for their valuable input and support as guest attendees at some of our Board meetings this year. The Board welcomes anyone to attend any of our meetings. They are generally held the third Wednesday of each month. Please contact me by e-mail at eovadia824@earthlink.net or phone if you are interested in attending, or if you have any agenda items to be discussed with the Board. I want to give each of you the opportunity to participate on this kind of a level, as true stakeholders in the process.

Over the next several months, we will be working to update the KJA website, and through it, we hope to establish different forums for communication and idea exchange. I would like to thank Michael Ovadia for agreeing to resurrect this project and continue its maintenance.

Through our efforts, the Board is hoping to engage the community at a broader level and inspire action on a more local level.

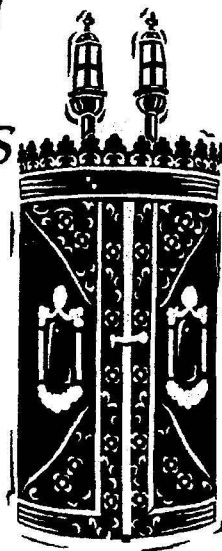
Shalom,

David Ovadia
President

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

לשנה טובה

*We wish the Karaite
Jews of America a
Very Happy New
Year Full of Good
Health, Happiness
and Peace.*



The Biblical/Karaite calendar differs from the Rabbinic Calendar on the observance of the Jewish New Year. The Rabbanite calendar places the beginning of the year, "Rosh Hashanah," on a holiday the Bible refers to as Yom Teruah (Day of Shouting), which occurs on the first day of the Seventh month.¹ Karaites celebrate the New Year in the month of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For the Torah states: "This month will be for you the beginning of months; It is first of the months of the year" (Exodus 12:2). After this explicit statement, the Torah proceeds to describe the ceremony of the Passover Sacrifice, which is to take place in this first month. Similarly, Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 list the holidays and both passages describe the Passover Sacrifice in the first month and Yom Teruah in the seventh month.

Karaites do not blow a Shofar on Yom Teruah. This is because there is no commandment to do so. According to Rabbinic tradition "Teruah" (Hebrew Root: טוּ) refers to a sound that is created by a Shofar (Ram's Horn).² Yet the same root word (טוּ) is used in Numbers 23:21 to signify shouting³ and in Numbers 10:5-6, where we are told to blow silver trumpets. Interestingly, five verses later G-d commands us to sound⁴ the silver trumpets on the New Moon, i.e. first of every month (see Numbers 10:10). What is clear from all these verses is that the word Teruah, after which the day is named, is a general term for making a loud noise, whether made by a Ram's horn, a silver trumpet, cymbals, or even a congregation praying to G-d.

Since a horn is sounded in the form of a trumpet on the first of every month, we must ask why Yom Teruah, the first day of the seventh month is set aside as a holy convocation. Unfortunately, the Torah itself does not tell us why this day is set aside as a Mo'ed (Appointed Time). Yet since it is the start of the month in which both Yom Kippur and Succot occur, its importance becomes self-evident. This appears to be a national day of preparation for the Israelites for the upcoming holidays. In an agricultural society, Succot, a holiday thanking G-d for the harvest and asking for a healthy harvest in the year to come, is of the utmost importance. Karaites have always used Yom Teruah as a national day of prayer to prepare for the upcoming holidays of the seventh month.

¹ The Rabbis claim, however, that this date is not the New Year for the Jewish people but rather the New Year for the world. For some argue that this is the day on which the world was created. This however has no basis in the Tanach.

² The Hebrew root טוּ is indeed used in connection with a Shofar in Leviticus 25:9.

³ To shout to God in prayer is also expressed other places throughout the Tanach such as "Shout (Root: טוּ) unto God with a singing voice!" (Psalm 47:2), which uses the same verbal root as "Teruah". Furthermore the verbal root in Teruah is also used to describe the sound of cymbals: "Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding (Root: טוּ) cymbals" (Psalm 150:5).

⁴ The verbal root for "Teruah" is not used here.

From the Board

For the 2003-2004 year, the Board has decided to focus most of its efforts in the areas of education and communication. To that end, the Board has formed committees in order to work towards meeting the following specific goals:

Education – *Joseph Moussa, Abe Massuda, Samuel Saddik*

- Educate the community both young and old.
- Strengthen our identity by teaching about our heritage and our beliefs.
- Provide an educational vehicle for Hebrew and Torah study. We are currently working on a plan to educate our children through various programs. We have researched our children's demographics throughout the United States and have come to the conclusion that our programs will need to reach a wide range of ages over a broad area. We are looking for regional representatives to help support education within all our communities throughout the United States. *Any individuals interested, please contact Samuel Saddik at ssaddik@pacbell.net.*
- Maintain our heritage through education.

Communication

- Resume publication of the Bulletin on a biannual basis
- Update and maintain the member database – *If you move, or any of your contact information changes, please contact Oreett Lichaa at swim961@earthlink.net.*
- Resurrect the KJA website, develop new content, and keep it current – *Michael Ovadia is doing a lot of work behind the scenes, and we hope to have something to unveil over the next few months.*
- Establish regional hubs for the purpose of channeling and distributing communications across our various geographic regions – *Walter Marzouk has volunteered to represent the southern California region, and we are looking for other people to represent the following regions: Chicago, Baltimore, and New York (including the Northeast). For any individual(s) interested in representing one of these areas, please contact Debbie Farag at dfarag@pacbell.net.*

Calling Out to the Community

We want to emphasize again that we cannot achieve what we hope to accomplish within the confines of the Board alone. We are the Karaite Jews of America, and we want to open up communication and facilitate the exchange of ideas, news, and information from throughout the country. Even if you do not live in one of the geographic regions identified above, please feel free to contribute articles, news or information. While we may not be able to publish everything, we will do our best to address the particular topic in some form or fashion.

Family tree records keeper needed: David Elichaa has been diligently working to maintain the KJA family tree for the past several years, and we are in need of someone new to take over this responsibility. The ability to read Hebrew is helpful with respect to new information received from Israel, but please don't let that stop you from volunteering. If you are willing to assist with maintaining this important history of our people, please contact David at DavidEElichaa@worldnet.att.net.

If anyone has a particular Karaite topic or question of interest to them, you may contact Shawn Lichaa at shawnlichaa@earthlink.net or Abe Massuda at ABEmassuda@aol.com. They are happy to research it and respond to you personally, or perhaps use it as a topic for an upcoming article in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Finally, as is usually the case with organizations such as ours, we have many needs to fulfill and only very limited resources to respond to those needs. The maintenance and upkeep of the synagogue alone is a continual challenge, and it is through the dedication of a precious few individuals that this is achieved. There are a number of elders and financially strapped members in our community with special needs. We are trying to spark the interest of the community through special programs and activities. The KJA needs your contributions and your support. Remember, if your support can't be in the form of money, please consider making a donation of your time. Reach out and lend a hand.

If you would like to make a donation, please send your check to the KJA to the following address:

Temple B'nai Israel
ATTN: KJA Treasurer
1575 Annie Street
Daly City, CA 94015

The best sort of donation is one that is unrestricted, so that we can apply funds where they are most needed; however, if you do have a specific purpose in mind, please indicate that when you enclose your contribution. Thank you and G-d bless.

Is There a Heaven?

By Abraham Massuda

In my last article, I wrote about what it meant to be “chosen.” G-d told the Children of Jacob (Israel) when they came out of Egypt that we were to be made into a nation of priests for all the nations. We learned that we were chosen by G-d to hold, keep, and follow the commandments of the Torah. Doing so obligates us to notify and correct others when they break the commandments.

People of all eras have entertained the concepts of heaven and hell, and in recent years, we have witnessed people killing themselves and others with the notion that they would go immediately to heaven and a better life.

What does the Torah say about this? Well, if we look into the first chapter of the Torah we learn about the creation of everything that G-d made. The Torah mentions that G-d created heaven (“Hashamayim”) and earth. Heaven here refers to the skies where all the stars and planets reside. There is no mention of a place that was created called hell.

There are many examples in the Torah that demonstrate that when life ends, there is nothing more. The first example is that of Abel, who was murdered at the hand of his brother Cain. Cain was punished for taking his brother’s life, but nowhere did the Bible say that Cain went to a place like hell. Another example is that of the Sons of Aaron who made a false offering. G-d killed them both with fire, but again, there was no mention of sending them to hell. Finally, the Torah describes Moses’ age of 120 years as a complete and a full life. That’s it...end of story. There is no suggestion of any kind of other place to go to after death. You earn your blessings and your punishment in life based on your closeness to fulfilling God’s commandments.

In another portion of the Torah G-d tells us that if we follow His commandments he will bless us, and make our lives on earth long, prosperous, and free of sickness. This sort of good life on earth, in essence, is meant to be our “heaven.”

To further understand the concepts of heaven and hell (or lack thereof), let's explore the meanings of blessing and curse. The first blessing we see in the Bible is when G-d blessed the animals and the creatures that He had created and said, “Be fruitful and multiply.” If we follow all the steps in the Creation, we see that G-d made everything that is essential for creatures to sustain their lives from one generation to another. He created the sun for the day, the moon and stars for the night, the plants, water, and the seasons. When you are given something without having contributed your own effort, this is a blessing.

On the contrary, within the same story of the Creation, we have an example of the punishment that befell Adam and Eve when they disobeyed G-d and ate from the Tree of Knowledge. G-d expelled them from the Garden of Eden and cursed the land. Since the land was no longer bearing fruit on its own, Adam was forced to till the land so he could survive. In the case of Cain, he had to work the land even harder because G-d caused his portion of the land to produce to only partial capacity. This life of bitterness and difficulty, in essence, could be interpreted as our “hell.”

In summary, when a life expires, there is no other place to go...no heaven and no hell. We each make our own heaven and hell right here on earth.

I would like to conclude this article with the following blessing:

May G-d bless you and keep you.

May G-d make the light of His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May G-d lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

And let us all say, Amen.

How the Bible Came to Be

In my work with Alpha Epsilon Pi, North America's Jewish Fraternity, I have the opportunity to discuss a wide array of topics with students from throughout the United States and Canada. One such student was reviewing his notes from his Judaic studies class with me, and he quoted his professor as saying that the Rabbis sealed¹ the Bible; which consists of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings², at a conference in the city of Yavneh in the year 90 CE. This has serious implications for Karaites. Had the Rabbis sealed the Bible, it would delegitimize the ability of the Karaites to follow only the Bible, for the Rabbis could easily contend that it is paradoxical that the Karaites observe one creation of the Rabbis, i.e. the Bible, and not another one, i.e. the Talmud.

While there indeed was a conference of Rabbis at Yavneh, this conference was not, as many claim, a meeting to decide which books would ultimately become part of the Bible. The discussion at Yavneh, as reported in the Talmud, pondered whether certain books made the hands of the reader impure. For example, the books of Esther, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes, each of which is part of the biblical canon, were the center of the impurity debate.³

There was also another debate at Yavneh. This focused on whether certain books should be hidden away and never read because the Rabbis believed they misled the average reader. One of the Biblical books under discussion was Ezekiel. The Rabbis at Yavneh, interestingly, never debated whether Ezekiel made the hands impure; they simply debated whether it should be put away. In the end, the Rabbis decided not to remove the book of Ezekiel from circulation.

Now that we understand the discussion at Yavneh, it would be helpful to piece together when the Bible was actually sealed. The famous Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, who lived during the destruction of the Temple and during the conference of Yavneh, wrote in one of his works that the Jews everywhere, unlike the Greeks, agreed to what books were part of the biblical canon:

¹ To seal a text means that nothing may be changed from that version of the text. This is also called "canonizing."

² The Torah was given to the Israelites over a course of 40 years in the desert, while the Writings and the Prophets were written over the next several centuries.

³ See the Talmud, section Mishna Yadim 3:10 for this debate.

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, as the Greeks have, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them 5 belong to Moses. . . the prophets who were after Moses. . .and hymns to God . . . for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines. . . (Against Apion 1:8)

It is not possible for the Bible to have been canonized at Yavneh and for Josephus, largely believed to be credible, to have said that no one for generations had even contemplated adding to or subtracting from the biblical works. Josephus recognized the three parts of the Bible. Furthermore, more than two hundred years before Yavneh an author by the name of Ben Sira, in his book "The Wisdom of Ben Sira" makes reference to the Bible as already having three parts.

Given that the evidence suggests that the Bible was sealed long before Yavneh, it would be helpful to know the traditional Karaite view on the situation. Karaites maintain that the Bible was sealed at the time of the last of the prophets, who was probably Malachi. Some Karaite scholars even believe that Malachi himself sealed the Bible. Regardless of one's position on how the Bible was actually canonized, it is apparent that the Bible was sealed long before the conference of Rabbis at Yavneh.

Past Highlights

We would like to highlight the following noteworthy activities that occurred over the last few months:

1. Publication of the Just for the Record in the History of the Karaite Jews of Egypt in Modern Times, by Mourad El-Kodsi. Mourad received a special letter of appreciation from Dr. William Brenner, a retired university professor knowledgeable in Karaite matters.
2. Marc Khedr gave a personal testimony of his story during the Six Day War in June of 1967 at the JIMENA (Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa) Conference at Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco on March 23, 2003. Please visit <http://www.jimena-justice.org/conference/khedr.htm> for a full account of Marc's story.
3. Joseph Abdel Wahed, co-founder of JIMENA, was a guest panelist on Michael Krasny's San Francisco KQED Forum radio program on May 19, 2003 entitled "Displaced Jewish Inhabitants of Arab States." The discussion centered around the fate of these displaced Jews, as well as the issue of compensation for financial and emotional distress. Other guest panelists were Semha Alwaya, an attorney from Berkeley, CA; Vivienne Roumani-Denn, National Executive Director of the American Sephardi Federation; and Joel S. Bein, Professor of Middle East History at Stanford University, Past President of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, and author of "Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and Creation of the Modern Diaspora." Please visit <http://www.kqed.org/programs/program-landing-local.jsp?progID=RD19> and scroll down to the bottom of the page where you will see "Audio Archive." Click on this link and look for the program dated May 19, 2003. The programs are listed in reverse chronological order.
4. A KJA community picnic and tennis tournament was held on August 10, 2003 in Daly City, CA.

Coming Attractions

Joseph Abdel Wahed will be giving the speech, "Memories of an Egyptian Jew," in which he will discuss his experience growing up as a Jew and a Karaite in Egypt. He will explain how the Egyptian authorities succeeded in dispossessing and expelling approximately 80,000 Jews. In addition, he will recount how nearly one million Jews in nine Arab countries suffered the same fate.

Look for Joe at the following dates and locations:

Saturday, October 4, 2003 – Temple Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, CA

Tuesday, October 21, 2003 – ORT (Organization for Educational & Technological Training), Walnut Creek, CA

Date TBD – Temple Emanuel, San Francisco, CA

For specific times, please contact Joe Wahed at jaw7@ix.netcom.com.

Holidays 2004

Calendar of the Karaite Holidays

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Yom Teruah (Rosh Hashana) | Saturday, September 27, 2003 |
| Erev Yom Kippur | Sunday, October 5, 2003 |
| Yom Kippur | Monday, October 6, 2003 |
| Sukkot | Saturday, October 11-17, 2003 |
| Simhat Torah | Saturday, October 18, 2003 |
| Fast of Gadalia (Shevit) | Monday, October 20, 2003 |
| Fast of 10th (Tevet) | Sunday, December 4, 2004 |
| Purim | Saturday, February 6, 2004 |
| Passover | Tuesday, April 6-12, 2004 |
| Yom Hanaphat Haomer | Sunday, April 11, 2004 |
| Memorial Day (Holocaust) | Sunday, April 18, 2004 |
| Israeli Independence Day | Monday, April 26, 2004 |
| Shevuot | Sunday, May 30, 2004 |
| Fast of the 9th of Tammuz | Sunday, June 27, 2004 |
| Fast of the 7th of Av (Eykha) | Sunday, July 25, 2004 |
| Fast of the 10th of Av (Eykha) | Wednesday, July 28, 2004 |



Announcements

We proudly announce the following births:

Kelsey Alyse Rosenzweig, born to
Lori and Shawn Rosenzweig of Owings Mills, MD,
on March 31, 2003

Ashley and Joshua Poshard, born to
Lisa and Dean Poshard,
of San Jose, CA on April 6, 2003

Joshua Nathan Coleman, born to
Jenny and Paul Coleman of San Francisco, CA
on September 11, 2003

Mazel tov to the parents and their families!!!

Congratulations to the following graduates:

- Isabel Khedr graduated from Skyline College in May, 2003 with an Associates of Art degree in Universal Studies. She will be attending St. Mary's/Samuel Merritt College, where she will be pursuing her BS in Nursing
- On June 26, 2003, Jennifer Khedr graduated with 4.0 GPA from Santa Monica High School. Jennifer is admitted to University of Irvine
- Victor Khedr qualified as a certified master automobile technician in June 2003
- Lilly Lichaa graduated University of California, Los Angeles in June 2003
- Sabrina Sutherland graduated high school in May, 2003 and is attending University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA

Best of luck to each of you in all your future endeavors!

Calling all Swingers, Climbers, and Hangers!

Do you remember swinging on a swing and trying to touch the sky? Or climbing a jungle gym and pretending it was a big mountain? How about hanging up side down and having all the blood rush to your head? Remember how much fun you had going to the park or taking your children to the park? Well, we are trying to bring that excitement and fun to our temple.

We are pleased to announce that the Board has unanimously approved the construction of a play area at the temple. Now, all children will be able to swing, climb and play while their parents



We know that this sounds very exciting and that you don't want to miss out on all the fun. We know that you are asking yourselves how you can join in and get involved. Well, there are several ways. First, we are looking for individuals to help clean and organize the storage areas. Then, we will be looking for donations, in the form of a contribution of either finances or materials. We appreciate your support.

Condolences...

On the loss of Suzanne Massuda, wife of Elie Chalom Massuda, who passed away August 5, 2003. May she rest in peace. Our heartfelt thanks go out to Emiel Khedr, Elie Nounou, and Elie and Serene Moussa for all their dedicated efforts in caring for both Suzanne and Elie over the past few months and years. Special thanks go out to all the people who have responded to the additional calls for help and support...They are too numerous to list here.

With great sorrow must we inform you of the passing of Hefez Haim Halevy, the Rabbi of the Karaite Community in Ashdood, Israel, who was 52 years old. Rabbi Hefez served the Karaite Community there for the past 5 years in leading the prayers services, teaching bar mitzvah age children in reciting the Karaite prayers, and performing the slaughtering of animals in the Karaite tradition. After losing a brother in one of the Israeli-Arab wars, Rabbi Hefez pledged his life to G-d. He was taught by Rabbi Marzouk in Ofakim and learned to become a Rabbi in the Karaite customs. He became a teacher to 10 students, and those 10 individuals, in turn, learned how to lead the Karaite services.

Even though he was told of his sickness a year ago, he kept on serving his community to his very last breath. While he was at the slaughterhouse, performing G-d's ways, he lost consciousness and passed away a couple of days later.

His wife Lolite, four children, and two grandchildren survive Rabbi Hefez.

It is our duty to reward such a good soul with a remembrance of his good deeds on earth. A restricted fund has been initiated in order to collect funds to be sent to his widow and surviving family. Please send your donation to the KJA, including "Rabbi Hefez Fund" on the memo line, to the following address:

Temple B'nai Israel
ATTN: KJA Treasurer
1575 Annie Street
Daly City, CA 94015



David Ovadia